



FEBRUARY 2009 NEWSLETTER

THE NATIONS LEADER IN ESTIMATING SOFTWARE

Please Celebrate With Us: Our 30th Birthday!

McCormick Systems is celebrating 30 years in business in 2009. As many know, we were founded in 1979 by Jack McCormick, an electrical contractor. Here's part of the story.

Early to mid 1970s



The McCormick Electric Fleet

After spending his first two years as an electrical contractor providing service work to home owners and grain mills in the Willamette Valley in Oregon, Jack joined NECA. Soon after, he expanded his business to include commercial work within a 100-mile radius.

As a member, Jack was able to attend a seminar put on by NECA that explored something that was a relatively new idea: Use of computers by electrical contractors. This new concept had a strange impact on the young contractor; he returned home from the seminar . . . *hooked!*

That began the process that led to our company's founding. Jack McCormick took a hard look at the four computerized estimating systems offered in the late 1970s. He purchased the most expensive one.

But there were problems. Estimating via computer certainly *did* help, but Jack felt that there were a lot of limitations.

It's one thing to complain; it's another thing to be pro-active. Still hooked on the concept, Jack began what you might call "fooling around" . . . designing, on paper; a program that would provide him with exactly what he needed.

Shortly thereafter, he showed his idea to three others. That led to the formal formation of something called "Estimating Systems Incorporated".

McCormick Newsletter

Construction/ Technology Links

[Electrical Design-Build For Owners \(ElectricTV\)](#)

[IEC 'Power Up Your Career' Video \(YouTube\)](#)

[Anti-Counterfeit Initiative Kick-Off Event](#)

[NECA Government Affairs Video Archive](#)

[Control Engineering videos](#)

[Architectural Record videos](#)

[BuildingsTV](#) (page down on home page)

[IAEI Weekly Update – from the inspectors](#)

[Lighting Industry News – from IES](#)

[Numerous newsletters from the AGC](#)

[Green news for the electrical industry \(TED\)](#)

[The EleBlog](#)

[Technology blog for the AEC industries](#)

Training Dates



Upcoming Standard Training

Classes in ARIZONA are set for Feb. 18-20, and March 11-13, April 1-3.

Upcoming classes in Columbia, MD, include Feb. 18-20, March 11-13 and April 1-3 (all of them are Standard classes).

An **ADVANCED** class will be held April 20-21 in Scottsdale AZ.

We've added **2009 training dates** [training dates](#)

Training can be "suit-cased" to your facility. We can tailor our training to your needs. Ask us about customized training at your site!

Call to register for any of the above classes, including those in Maryland: 1-800-444-4890.

We've posted training dates, directions to our training facilities, and registration forms on our Web page. Click the "Education" button on our home page, or go directly to this link: [Education](#)

First sale: 1978



McCormick Estimating: The Early Years

And so our company's first-ever commercial electrical estimating system program was based on an Apple Computer. The "prehistoric" machine had 10k of memory; our first program required three floppy disks (which were 5¼ inches square!).

It wasn't a paradise for users (not just yet!). Contractors and their estimators would have to, from time to time, exchange disks as they proceeded through the takeoff.

In 1978, Jack advertised his system in *The NECA Newsletter* as "one used estimating software package with computer, \$12,000" Three phone calls came in; he chose NECA member Consolidated Electric in St. Louis as the best sales lead.

So the real commercial inception of McCormick Systems took place on the day that Jack flew to St. Louis. The potential customer picked him up at the airport. After a demo at the customer's location, the men shook on it and closed the deal.

Jack McCormick went home with a \$12,000 check.

1979 debut at NECA Show

Obviously, there might be real demand for an electrical estimating product designed (by an electrical contractor) to serve unique needs. To reach a larger market, McCormick Systems exhibited (for the first time ever) at the 1979 NECA Show (in Las Vegas).

Note that at this moment, the competing systems were mainframe software programs. Jack took the Apple II computer to the show. It had two floppy drives, a monitor, a length probes, and a printer. The "system" offered contractors and estimators access to 300 items and 100 assemblies!

Before the carpet was rolled up at that Las Vegas show, we had sold two more systems. Our hold on the attention of electrical contractors around the U.S. solidified two years later when, at the 1981 NECA Show (Miami), Electrical Contractor magazine awarded our estimating software the "Contractor's Choice" award (forerunner of what is now the magazine's "ShowStopper" award).



You can set standard labor percentages along with some default tax numbers and other costs figures in your sample job bidsummary and paste those into every new job (easier if you set that as the default)

An often overlooked ability is the BidSummary Universal. This allows you to copy other cost figures from one bidsummary to many others in a few clicks. This really helps if you have many alternates or bidsummary scenarios.

[Visit the McCormick Website](#)

[Unsubscribe](#)



Neca Show 1982: proudly displaying our first Contractor's Choice award from the year before.

Stops along the way

McCormick Systems has since taken home an additional 10 “ShowStopper” awards as the result of new and innovative products introduced at various NECA Shows. (No other single company that has taken home that many awards in the 30-year period!)

Here are some of the highlights over the years:

1986 – our first introduction of software for use on IBM PC-based estimating products. This was an innovation in other ways, too: It was the first estimating system that allowed multiple takeoff screens (that feature is patented!).

1994 – we offered the first highlighter count probe.

1998 – introduced Change Order for Windows. At this year’s NECA Show, the Change Order software won a “ShowStopper” award (the company’s 4th).

1999 – McCormick Systems offered the market the CAD interface module.

2001 – our offerings expanded to include a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) for our Time-and-Material billing program.

2008 – Our newest addition, On Screen Estimating. Take off drawings on your screen from PDF or other digital files.

Our building

Built in 1928, the HQ building we now occupy (in Chandler, AZ) is an historic building. It served as the Chandler Armory from 1938 until World War II ended. After hosting a variety of occupants over the decades, the building basically was abandoned and “boarded up” early in the 1990s.

It remained unoccupied, an eyesore of sorts in downtown Chandler, until we purchased it in 1999. Our first move: Tearing out the “improvements” made by previous tenants over the years (we filled 10 roll-off containers with the debris).



We then began the restoration effort. It took some time; we official moved in during the summer of 2001.

Beyond the building's historic status and the effort we put into restoring it, the move was a major change for our company. Up until we moved in, we had leased space for all of our (then) 22-year history!

Included in our refurbishing:

- antique doors that matched the originals were found in New Orleans;
- all original windows openings were opened back up to the original size and replaced with windows to match the original;
- stucco was removed from interior walls, letting the original brick show through;
- furnishings inside were found to match the historic "look," including pot-bellied stoves, and
- with the goal of allowing the original building to show through, most of the modern-day mechanical systems—fans, lights, duct work—are exposed.

Interested in reading more on the building restoration effort? [See this archived newsletter.](#)



Update: What's Jack is up to

These days, McCormick Systems is managed by Todd McCormick, one of Jack's sons.

Innovation remains a byword for the company. At this past October's NECA show, we introduced a new interface with another company's product, facilitating On Screen Estimating – earning us our 11th ShowStopper award!



Jack's other interest, the Baja Bush Pilots, is involved in search and rescue as well as humanitarian efforts for disaster relief in countries south of the border. He flies a twin Aero Commander. When not home with Karaen, his wife of 50 years, Jack can be found either at his ranch in Northern Arizona or flying around in Mexico, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama.... and more.

For more about Jack, see our reprint of the profile that TED magazine did about him in 2007, in [this archived newsletter](#).

We're not done yet!

All in all, the McCormick Systems story has something for everyone: History, a risky beginning, a start in the “prehistoric” days of personal computing, a move from Oregon to Arizona, our own “air force,” and much, much more.

While the story above goes into detail about what we've been doing over the past 30 years, Todd and Jack – and all of our people – know the basic story hasn't actually changed: Just as in the beginning, we're fixated on creating an easy, savvy, and productive estimating experience for contractors.

If every company can be said to have a “culture,” then that's McCormick's “secret of success” . . . our focus started with and remains on YOU.

See Us At Electric West!

Find McCormick Systems in Booth #300 at the Electric West show, March 18-20 in Las Vegas. [Click here for more.](#)



The image is a promotional graphic for the Electric West and Power Quality event. It features a dark blue background with a network of black cables and connectors. The text is arranged in a list-like format on the left side, and a callout box on the right lists the target audience.

electric West
Co-Located With
PowerQuality
Conference
March 17–20, 2009
Professional Advancement Courses
March 17
Exhibit Hall
March 18–20
Las Vegas Convention Center
Las Vegas, NV
www.electricshow.com

Electric West and Power Quality & Reliability are Specifically for:

- Contractors
- Consulting/Specifying Engineers
- Plant/Facility Engineers & Managers
- Electricians
- Company Presidents/Owners/Partners

April 22-26 User's Conference: *Your Quick-Ref Schedule*

See the [January newsletter](#) for details we have thus far on our annual McCormick Systems User's Conference, to be held April 22-26 at the Embassy Suites in Scottsdale, AZ. For your quick reference, here's what we've got planned:

SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE		
Date	Event	Time
Mon., 4/20	Standard & Advanced Windows Training (separate classes)	7am-4pm
Tues., 4/21	Day 2, Standard & Advanced Windows Training Classes	7am-4pm
Wed. 4/22	McCormick Masters Golf Tournament	tee off: 7:30am
Wed., 4/22	Welcoming Reception	7pm-9pm
Thur. 4/23	Registration	
Thur. 4/23	Conference Sessions	7:30am - 5pm
Thur. 4/23	Computer Lab	9am - 5pm
Fri. 4/19	Conference Sessions	7am - 4pm
Fri. 4/20	Computer Lab	7am - 3:00p
Fri. 4/20	Dinner	6pm
Sat. 4/21	Computer Lab	7:30am - 12

Ready to reserve your spot(s)? Call us (800 444 4890) for more information or to register!

PERSPECTIVE

January items from www.eleblog.com

LED Streetlights - Bang For Buck

(posted Jan. 30) My client NECA+IBEW together run ElectricTV.net. The recent edition (posted 12/29/08) included a segment on LED street lights in Ann Arbor, Mich.

It might be worth [a look-see](#).

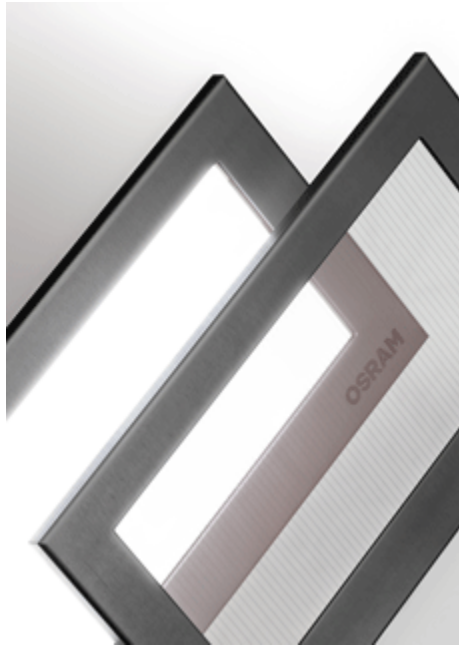


The City of Ann Arbor, Michigan, the newest LED City™, expects to install more than 1,000 LED streetlights beginning next month. The City anticipates a 3.8-year payback on its initial investment. The LED lights typically burn five times longer than the bulbs they replace and require less than half the energy. The LED streetlights currently installed in Ann Arbor are based on the New Westminster Series made by [Lumec](#), Inc., which contain LED light engines from Relume Technologies, Inc. The light engines are based on the performance-leading Cree XLamp® LED.

Full implementation of LEDs is projected to cut Ann Arbor's public lighting energy use in half and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2,425 tons of CO2 annually, the equivalent of taking 400 cars

off the road for a year. Detroit Edison, Ann Arbor's local utility provider, will meter the new LED streetlights with the intent to gather sufficient information to develop new LED-based tariffs.

OLEDs Will Change Lighting



(posted Jan. 28) When I talk to people about OLEDs, I try to point out that they are going to change the very nature of lighting. The technology makes things like a "wall of light" possible (changing ambient lighting, for example).

Here's a 1,200-word story from the Cape Times (in South Africa), offered 12/23/08, headlined The future of lighting may be turned on to paper-thin sheets.

The article talked about OLEDs (organic LEDs). It's stuff that used to be futuristic. You'll find the article FASCINATING. And yet it doesn't go far enough into the possibilities of this technology.

This is gonna be BIG. [Find the piece here.](#)

Light Bulb Article



(posted Jan. 19) An Associated Press article on Boston.com -- on [light bulbs](#) -- pretty much goes all the way to the place (which is pretty impressive, considering it is relatively short). Among other facts in there:

Osram Sylvania, one of the world's largest bulb producers, commissioned a survey to find out if the public agreed, only to find out 80 percent of Americans don't know the light bulb, as we know it, is on the way out.

The cost of switching to LEDs and compact fluorescents could be a jolt to some consumers. Royal Philips Electronics introduced a line of LEDs in Europe last year for about \$90. General Electric's base LED bulb sells for about \$35 to \$40.

Americans keep about 73 million lights on every day for a period of between four and 12 hours, with about 28 million powered by energy-efficient bulbs, according to the

What the article OMTS: General Electric recently halted its research into creation of a more-efficient incandescent bulb. In theory, this would be a bulb that could meet the federal efficiency lighting standards of 2012 (keeping incandescents in the game). Here's what Craig DiLouie [wrote about this](#) a month ago.

Ground Rods -- Requirements

(posted Jan. 19) [From the IAEI magazine](#) (subscription required). Remember, this is written for INSPECTORS. A slice:

Not only is the use of non-conforming material in violation of the *NEC*, where it carries a certification mark of a listing agency, its non-conformance places it in violation of use of that certification.

Situations have been documented where a legitimate certification is being violated with the material being produced at other plants, often in foreign countries, not legitimately certified.

Data On Electrical Workers

(posted Jan. 16) I just got around to reading "Occupational Employment and Wages, 2007." The Bureau of Labor Statistics emitted this report on 5/9/08.

Key data:

According to the BLS document, there were 624,560 electricians employed (not all in construction, I don't think).

Median hourly wages: \$21.53.

Mean (average) hourly wages; \$23.12.

Mean (average) annual wages: \$48,100.

Remember, these numbers are for 2007. NONE of the groups below were included in the electricians category.

Other related occupations:

Electric motor, power tool, and related repairers: 22,150 of them, \$17.40 hourly mean, \$36,180 mean annual wages.

Electrical & electronics installers + repairs, transportation equipment: 18,160 of them, \$21.25, \$44,210

Electrical & electronics repairers, commercial and industrial equipment: 79,150 of them, \$22.90, \$47,630.

Electrical & electronics repairers, powerhouse, substation & relay: 23,320, \$27.98, \$58,200/year.

Electronic home entertainment equipment installers & repairers: 38,170 of them, \$15.94 mean, \$33,160 mean annual.

Security & fire alarm systems installers: 60,700 of them, \$17.93, \$37,290.

Electrical power-line installers and repairers: 109,990 of them, \$24.85 hourly mean, \$51,690 annual average.

Telecommunications line installers and repairers: 160,250 people, \$22.39/hour, \$46,570 annual.

Green Buildings, Deeper

(posted Jan. 12) After listening to a 90-second podcast from a Jones Lang LaSalle associate on "sustainability in industrial buildings," the website Globest.com (which is pretty good, by the way) asked him to elaborate ("go into greater depth on the feasibility of building industrial product to LEED standards." [Here's where you find it](#) -- and here's an important (to EleBlog visitors, I hope) slice:

GlobeSt.com: You say industrial lighting costs can be reduced by "up to 40%," but what is the average savings? How much additional up front costs would be involved to reach the 40% figure?

Brandt: From a tenant's perspective, often new buildings can come outfitted with energy-efficient T5 or T8 lighting already in place. There are no direct costs for this tenant, only savings in their monthly electricity costs. Other times this cost will come out of a tenant improvement allowance.

A general estimate is that T5 or T8 lighting will require a 15%-25% premium over the cost of metal halide lighting. The actual average savings is tough to estimate as other factors such as daylight harvesting, motion sensors, interior painting, and skylights all affect the final number.

While this might not be as high as 40% for all tenants, any savings they can realize over older metal halide lighting will help to improve their bottom line.

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